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ABSTRACT

Second language needs of Cambodian refugees sponsored by the Lutheran Social Services resettlement program in Jacksonville, Florida are reported. The study used observation, structured interviews, and periodic data collection to examine patterns of refugee interaction and to develop a profile of language needs for comparison with the program's existing curriculum. The major finding of the program is a pronounced tendency of the refugees to depend on third parties in situations requiring interaction with Americans. A tendency of the third parties to help these refugees to the extent that it interferes with their language acquisition and acculturation was found to compound this dependency. The sponsors' curriculum was found to correspond to the refugees' language needs established in the profile, but little English use was observed outside the classroom, suggesting the need to change the types of learning activities and services offered in the program. (MSE)

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LANGUAGE NEEDS IDENTIFICATION OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES:

A CASE STUDY

Araya Rajatanavin Maurice

Presented at the 20th Annual Convention of TESOL (March 3-8, 1986 in Anaheim)

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Language Needs Identification of Cambodian Refugees: A Case Study

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Abstract

Identifying language needs is often discussed in language teaching circles and yet applications of theoretical models are difficult to find. The problems of Southeast Asian refugees in the U.S. in acculturating and in acquiring English as a second language is an important area of concern, but one in which the needs of the moment have often caused indepth study of the refugees needs to be pushed aside. This paper reports on a study designed to apply the tools of needs identification to the problems of Cambodian refugees in Jacksonville, Florida.

Qualitatitve methodology was used in the study, i.e. participant observation, structured interviews, and a cyclical approach to data collection. Patterns of interaction were noted and a profile of language needs, using Munby's 1978 model with some modifications, was then developed and compared to the existing curriculum for the refugees.

The major findings center on the pronounced tendency of refugees to depend on third-parties when confronted with situations requiring interaction with Americans. This, combined with the tendency of some third-parties to help to the extent that the help interferes with language acquisition and acculturation, bodes ill for English language instruction for refugees. While the sponsor's curriculum generally corresponds with the language needs found in the profile, the majority of refugees used English

very little outside the classroom. As such, a shift in emphasis in the types of learning activities used and services offered may be beneficial.

Background

Since the end of the Vietnam War in April, 1975, South East Asians have constituted the majority of refugees arrivals in the U.S. Over 700,000 have been taken in by the U.S. (Gordon, 1984) and more than 250,000 are still in camps in South East Asian countries, having fled from the fighting and famine and hoping to be granted asylum in western countries. The flow of these refugees led to 'The Refugee Act of 1980.'

One of the major issues addressed by this law is resettlement assistance, which provides a full range of federal programs to aid in the resettlement process. The refugee domestic assistance programs consist of immediate help, such as cash and medical care, and other long-term social services to facilitate general adjustment and to promote early employment and economic self-sufficiency. Services related to the latter are emphasized and receive high priority; these include employment services, such as job placement and job counseling, and English language training that aims at helping refugees acquire jobs and upgrade job skills. This emphasis on the economic aspects of refugee resettlement is due, in large part, to the large volume of refugees coming into the country (Lanphier, 1983).

The refugees in this study were sponsored by the Lutheran Social Services (LSS) in Jacksonville, Florida. On average, refugees stay with the LSS' ESL program for only 4-6 months before joining the workforce. What they learn during this time should be as useful and as related to their real

lives as possible, because once they become employed, they rarely seek more language training. Fatigue, family matters, and other concerns tend to steer them away from further training; in addition, the work environment is usually not conducive to acquiring English skills either (LSS, 1984b).

Language Needs Identification as a Basis for Program Development

The type of language training that aims at helping refugees acquire and upgrade job skills is Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL), which includes prevocational ESL, i.e. the language skills necessary for obtaining employment and other survival or coping skills (Crandall, 1979). The prevocational ESL program for refugees is part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in a global sense which refers to "the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose" (Mackay and Mountford, 1978:2). It implies, they explain, a specific aim that "may determine the precise area of language required, skills needed and the range of functions to which language is to be put" (1978:4). By its nature, ESP is student-task oriented (Chambers, 1980). Thus, it should focus on the purpose of the learner for learning the language, not on the language itself. Mackay and Mountford (1978:6) also state that:

> What constitutes language variations is the use to which language is put in particular circumstances by particular users. Hence, identifying homogeneous groups of language users and characterizing their uses of language in particular circumstances together with a representative selection of linguistic usage habitually employed, would be a productive procedure to adopt.

However, "rather than trying to elicit specific objectives from the client and guiding his or her priorities, we often design programs according

to our own preconceived ideas of what a 'reasonable' language program should include" (Bachman & Strick, 1981: 45). Palmer and Mackay (1978) further describe the situation in which many ESP programs fail because either no consideration is given to the actual learner's use of the language or because the list of uses is drawn up by the course designer based on imagination rather than objective assessment of the learner's situations. This imaginative list may be inaccurate and inappropriate for the real needs. This problem is actually not surprising because, as Schutz & Derwing (1981) explain, language teachers and program designers simply cannot wait for the research to be available before beginning work on the immediate problems.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The initial purpose of the study was to develop a profile of language needs of employment-bound and home-bound Cambodian refugees in the early stage of resettlement, i.e. the first one and a half years. This profile, once developed, was then contrasted with the content of the existing VESL program curriculum for the refugees in order to make recommendations for changes where appropriate. Both the profile and the list of recommendations are based on the identification of actual language needs of refugees in natural settings and real situations, e.g. while looking for work, doing things in the community, and so on.

The following objectives were addressed:

1. To identify the language needs of refugees for job-seeking and selected survival aspects during the initial resettlement period of up to one and a half years.

2. To develop a profile of the language needs stated above by analyzing the actual needs identified.

3. To compare the language skills and functions identified in the profile with the language skills taught in the existing curriculum.

4. To make recommendations for the existing language training program based on the literature and on the differences noted in #3.

Although the importance of needs identification is well-recognized, and various models for needs identification exist (Richterich, 1972; Mackay, 1978,; Munby, 1978), a review of the literature revealed little application of this process in helping with language program design, development , evaluation, or revision. This study attempts to show how the theory and methodology of language needs identification can be applied to a real situation and how it can help to improve a language program to better cater to its clients' real needs.

Methodology

Qualitative methodology was employed throughout the study, i.e. extensive use of participant observation (Spradley, 1980) and structured interviews. The approach is discussed in more detail under the sub-heading "Procedures for data collection."

Site selection. The site for the study was Jacksonville, Florida, which has a large refugee community of about 1000 people, with 750 Cambodians. Resettlement in Jacksonville is continuing at or above the rate of the last several years whereas the national rate of resettlement has declined. This is due to the fact that Jacksonville is one of the twelve original Cambodian Cluster Sites and still has more than 700 potential family reunifications from South East Asian camps (LSS, 1984b). Thus, the city has an adequate number of refugees and a sufficient number of activities related to language

development. This availability is one of the main criteria that Spradley (1980) suggests for site selection. Good cooperation and assistance was received from the staff and program directors of the LSS, which is the major voluntary agency that sponsors and provides initial resettlement services and ongoing social services to most of the refugees in Jacksonville.

Entry. Months before the research took place, the LSS program directors were contacted through the ESL coordinator and the research project was discussed. At this time, the objectives of the study were presented, cooperation in providing curriculum materials, a refugee name list, etc. was gained, and permission to interview staff was given. The LSS was contacted first, before any actual contact with the refugees, because it seemed to be a smoother way of operating, especially because LSS serves as the legal sponsor of the refugees. In addition, the Cambodian community in Jacksonville, at the time of the study, did not have any formal center of its own, nor any leader who could be contacted; the LSS served not only as their sponsor and guardian but also as their representative as well.

Pilot study. The pilot study was launched a few months after the initial meeting with the LSS program director. A pilot study was felt to be needed before the data gathering process because the area of language needs identification for refugees is relatively new and it seemed difficult and perhaps unwise to make research design decisions based on the limited literature available. After the name lists of recently arrived refugees, i.e. those who had come within the last 18 months, were collected, the refugees were divided into three groups: those already employed, those looking for work, and the home-bound people. Then, three cases from each group were randomly selected to be studied at this stage. Beginning with the

employment-bound people, each case was observed for two consecutive days and then interviewed.

The first case was approached after his ESL class. A self-introduction was made and an explanation was given, after which his participation in the study was requested. Though he looked somewhat confused as to what the researcher really wanted, he agreed to participate. In two days of observation, however, it was found that he did virtually nothing besides going to school in the morning for half a day and then going back home to rest. He was interviewed with 'descriptive questions,' (Spradley, 1980), i.e. those used to guide the observations. Examples of such questions include "What do you do besides going to school?," "Do you go anywhere--shopping, seeing a doctor?," etc. He actually did other things and went other places, but he had just done them before the observation or wouldn't be doing them again until later, e.g. picking up food stamps.

A similar pattern developed in the next two cases observed. No other activities were seen, but the interviews indicated that the researcher missed the times when the refugees were doing other activities. At this point, a decision was made to change the strategies used for data gathering after the pilot study to the following:

(1) First, an attempt would be made to identify the activities of job-seeking, job-applying, and survival by observing the activities as they occurred. Most of these activities were done with the help of LSS staff, the refugees' cosponsors, or Cambodian friends. During the initial period of resettlement, due to lack of transportation, lack of knowledge of where places were located, and lack of language skills, the refugees had to depend on these people for transportation and translation. Thus, the research plan became one of identifying the different kinds of people helping the refugees

and then following them to observe the activities that they were doing with and for the refugees.

(2) Second, a decision was made to select 45 cases, 15 from each group of refugees, for interviews. In addition, people involved in helping the refugees were also interviewed.

The changes enabled a more efficient gathering of the data in a limited amount of time. Thus, while one employment-bound man had no immediate plan to begin work within the following four or five months and one woman had nothing to do during the observation and would not be active for another month, the LSS staff, co-sponsors, and friends were actively engaged in taking the refugees places and helping them in all sorts of ways, e.g. applying for jobs, seeing doctors, calling landlords, enrolling children in school, and so on. A change in strategy, in keeping with qualitative procedures (Spradley 1980; Bogdan and Biklen 1982) seemed appropriate.

Procedures for data collection. For data collection, the ethnography techniques of participant observation, both with moderate degrees of participation and no participation (Spradley, 1980), and structured interviewing were used. The study fit what Hymes (1972) calls 'topic-oriented' ethnography because it has a narrow focus on a certain aspect of a people's life, namely the language needs of Cambodian refugees in a U.S. urban area. Specifically, the needs, as stated earlier, relate to job-seeking, job-applying, and certain survival skills. Because the specific aims of the research was known from the beginning, the procedures for data collection and data analysis were shaped by that focus. However, the procedures did not follow a linear sequence of investigation, but rather a cyclical pattern in which the process included asking ethnographic questions, collecting data by observations, making records, analyzing data, and then going back to the

stage of asking questions and repeating the other steps again and again (Spradley, 1980).

First, the activities and situations in which the refugees used English were identified. To do that efficiently, the third party helpers needed to be identified; that was done by asking the refugees directly, sometimes with the help of an interpreter. From the beginning, time was spent with the randomly selected refugees in their homes. After introductions and explanations of what was being done, the researcher asked general questions about their lives, e.g. what they usually do, where they usually go, who helps to take them places, etc. This was done with the focus of first establishing good rapport with them and then moving on to questions relevant to the study; this proved to be an effective and efficient way of handling the situation.

Observation and analysis. After asking the ethnographic questions mentioned above, the people helping the refugees were contacted and asked for permission to be followed during the times of their contact with the refugees; they readily agreed to help and then the observations began. In some activities, e.g. going to church, going to parties, and going shopping, the researcher participated , but at other times, acted as a 'passive observer,' which Spradley (1980:59) defines as someone who is "present at the scene of action but who does not participate or interact with other people to any great extent" .

After each day of observing these activities, the accounts of what was seen were written; these accounts included descriptions of people, places, activities and situations as well as personal thoughts concerning what was seen and encountered. Also, from each observation, relevant documents, such as pamphlets, application forms, and signs were collected and copied.

After every week or two during the observation period, an initial analysis of the data was done by reviewing the records and by making lists of the who, what, where, and how of the activities observed. These lists served as a data base for developing more probing interview schedules.

During the observations, the refugees and their helpers were asked questions so as to learn exactly what was going on and to make sure it was understood properly. The total initial observation period was four weeks; however, after doing some interviews, it was found that certain information was missed in the observations so more were made. For example, it was learned from the interviews that many people take the oral test for getting a driver's license by using a Cambodian friend as an interpreter. After hearing about this, the researcher went to observe it in person to get a better understanding of the situation.

Interviews. A global idea of the kinds of activities that were taking place among the refugees was obtained after four weeks of observations. Interview schedules were then developed for the refugees to probe deeper into certain matters. The interviews with the refugees were done in three languages,English, Cambodian, or Thai, whichever was the most appropriate. The English and Thai interviews were conducted by the researcher; when the interviewee could not speak either of the two languages well, an interpreter was used. The interpreter, also a refugee, was also used as one of the informants to cross-check information learned from other sources.

All interviews with the refugees took place in the refugees' homes, which had both advantages and disadvantages. The fact that Cambodian neighbors would sometimes join in the interviews and helped to answer questions served as an advantage in case the interviewees forgot to say something. However, when the neighbors, or an extremely talkative spouse,

took over the conversation, problems arose. When the latter situation occurred, the strategy employed was to politely tell the people who was supposed to answer the particular question. This usually took care of the problem; when it did not, the interview was stopped and the researcher went back another time to finish it.

From the beginning, an interview plan was made of whom to interview and when, but it could not be strictly followed because of problems in getting in touch with the interviewees at the scheduled times. Making appointments was difficult because most of the interviewees did not have telephones. Even when appointments were made, many people did not pay much attention to the idea of keeping them; if they had other things to do or if friends came by to go somewhere with them, they would ignore the appointments. To counter this tendency, the strategy used was to show up at their homes unannounced and ask for interviews; if they were not at home, the researcher simply tried again later. This strategy worked well and the refugees did not seem to mind the visits, which may be due to the characteristics of South East Asian cultures; when someone goes to another person's house, no matter who the visitor is, the host feels an obligation to treat the visitor well. Almost all of the interviewees visited were very kind and made the researcher feel very welcome. Moreover, some of them stated that they felt honored for being visited at home and thanked the researcher for coming, inviting her to come back again.

Rapport with the interviewees was quite good. Sometimes the visits continued after the interviews, both with the interviewees and other members of the families. In some cases, some of the people called the researcher at home just to talk or to ask for help, e.g. to take them to the oriental food store, the HRS office for food stamps, etc. Given the rapport

and trust that was developed, virtually any questions asked were answered without anyone feeling offended. This might reflect another characteristic of their culture; privacy is much less valued than it is in Western cultures. Some people volunteered information about matters considered too personal to ask. For example, when asked general questions about apartments, the answers often went into detail on the cost of the rent and so on. When asked how they went to pick up their food stamps, many revealed how much in food stamps each received. This openness helped a great deal in providing both a broad perspective and an in-depth look at the lives of the refugees.

Interviews with other people involved were also done in order to triangulate their responses with the refugees' responses and with the observations, and also to probe deeper into certain matters. Other people interviewed included the LSS staff, the ESL coordinator, teachers, translators, co-sponsors from different church groups, Cambodian friends, employers, supervisors, landlords, and neighbors. Altogether, 33 people in this category were interviewed. Though some of them were quite helpful and cooperative, much time had to be spent and repeated atempts made before the interviews could be arranged, especially with the people in the business sector.

A tape recorder was used to record every interview. After each one, as many tapes as possible were transcribed in the field because of what Cobbe (1984) has noted, namely that transcribing the interviews gives good opportunities to evaluate interviewing behavior, rapport with the interviewees and the effectiveness of the questions.

Data analysis. The process of data analysis, as mentioned earlier, took place periodically within the research cycle in the field rather than all at

once at the end of the data gathering. The different stages of the data gathering process were as follows:

(1) Preliminary stage: After each day of observing, the account of what was observed was recorded; the record included who did what, with whom, when, where, how, and the ensuing consequences of the action. Then, during the observational period, a set of lists of different activities was created with all the relevant information from the records.

(2) In-depth analysis: After all the observations were completed, the records and lists were reviewed in order to develop a set of more comprehensive lists using Munby's (1978) model as a guideline; adaptations were made, e.g. by eliminating or adding parameters that were found to be irrelevant or relevant respectively. These lists were then used to develop interview schedules. Finally, a content analysis of the lists of activities from the observations and the results of the interviews was done ,which yielded a more complete profile of language needs.

(3) Final analysis: The language needs needed by the refugees as identified were compared with the language skills taught in the current curriculum at the LSS school. Only the macro level of skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, was looked at because the LSS curriculum was specified only at that level.

(4) Making recommendations: The recommendations were made based on the literature of teaching and learning English as a second language, and on the discrepancies found between the language needs and the language being taught. These recommendations were intended to help with possible curriculum revision at the school and also as a guideline for any ESL program for refugees which is planning or revising its curriculum.

Findings

Though the initial objectives were relatively narrow, matters of broader importance were discovered in the study. Specifically, the past and present conditions and lifestyles of the refugees, the roles of the helpers, and the patterns of interaction observed between the refugees and the outside world put any language instruction efforts into a wider and more complicated context. As such, those conditions, roles, and patterns will be noted before the profile of language needs is discussed.

The People

Education. About 75% of the Cambodians who resettled in Jacksonville were peasant farmers in their own country with very little education and perhaps 65% of the Cambodians were illiterate in their own language. The average formal education among men was 3-4 years while it was 1-2 years for women. People with education usually know some French since it had been the country's second language before the Khmer Rouge but there are only a few of them. The majority had never encountered a foreign language before their exposure and training in the South East Asian processing centers. One of the LSS staff members reported that nearly 100% had to be put into ESL classes before they could begin working. The researcher once expressed surprise to a Cambodian friend that 90% of the people randomly selected for the study consisted of farmers without much education. The friend, being a teacher himself, explained that this was because the Khmer Rouge had eliminated large numbers of educated people, leaving the farmers as the vast majority of the remaining people.

Work in the U.S. This lack of education has posed serious problems for the majority of people who have come to resettle in the U.S., both in terms of learning the new language and of having marketable skills and the ability to acquire good jobs. Thus, many people have ended up in entry-level, unskilled jobs; in Jacksonville, 60% of one particular company's workforce consists of refugees, especially Cambodians. Cambodians working there almost never have to use English; the company hires its own Cambodian interpreters and supervisors to help people in almost every way, from filling out application forms to giving instructions on the job. It was noted that people without language skills can get work there fairly easily, but that these people developed their language skills after employment much less than those who worked elsewhere. In addition, even though refugees may be able to perform their duties with little knowledge of English, most of the employers stated that English ability was a factor considered in promotion decisions.

The employers generally view the refugees as hard-working people with pride in their work, highly dependable, and very productive with excellent attendance (LSS, 1984a). At first, the employers may have hired the refugees because of financial incentives, e.g. tax breaks or reimbursements from the state for on-the-job training, but after becoming familiar with the refugees, the main reason for employers hiring them has become their reputation for being good workers.

Refugees get much assistance from the LSS, which has employment services, including job development, placement, follow-up, job-counseling and translation; in other words, the LSS acts as a liaison between the refugees and the employers. Whenever there is a problem with a refugee on the job, the employer can contact the LSS to help in solving it. The

combination of all of these factors has helped to make the unemployment rate for refugees very low in the Jacksonville area.

Women and work. Women in Cambodia, especially those in the rural areas, stayed home and worked as housewives or helped their husbands in the fields. However, since coming to the U.S., many women have found it necessary to go to work outside the home due to financial difficulties. Many of them stated that in Cambodia one person, usually the husband, could work and support a family no matter what its size. In contrast, they feel that everyone in the family must work in the U.S.; if only one works, they usually have to apply for food stamps. Besides the idea of leaving home for work, the women are also unfamiliar with the kinds of work available to them. The jobs, in industrial settings, are as different from their rural past as any jobs could be.

Women who stay at home are usually older, pregnant, or with small children. Some upper middle-aged women could work but refuse to due to fear of going outside or to resistance from the family. Younger women tend to be more enthusiastic about going to work; all of the young, pregnant women and those with small children reported that they plan to go to work when their children become old enough to go to school or day care.

Economic self-sufficiency. The refugees studied have tended to reach this goal very quickly. Once they become employed, they tend to become afraid of being laid-off because of their lack of language skills and job experience. Thus, according to both the refugees and their employers, they generally try very hard to please the employers, e.g. coming to work even when they are sick, working long hours and overtime, and so on. The refugees also noted that they can save a lot of money even though their wages are low. In addition, they do not generally mind living in low-cost

apartments in bad areas of the city and tend to eat cheap food in small quantities. As a result of their hard work and good saving habits, most refugees can afford to finance good, used cars, sometimes even new ones, within a few months of getting work.

Living clusters. The Cambodians studied tend to live in clusters near each other because the new life in a new country is totally alien to them and communication among the refugees has been reported by sponsors and employers as being surprisingly good. Word seems to pass among the refugees very quickly, as almost everyone shares experiences, and their homes are usually open to friends and neighbors; as a result, they seem to share very similar patterns in many aspects of their lives. For instance, they tend to go to one particular supermarket to cash payroll checks no matter how far away they live. Moreover, information travels back to the camps in South East Asia. One bit of 'advice' often passed to people in the camps is to lie about one's age; the reason is due to a widespread misperception that older people cannot attend ESL schools. Thus, almost everyone interviewed has had their age changed; one 65 yearold man said he changed his age to 47 and now regrets it because he still has to work.

The Helpers

When the refugees first arrive in the U.S., they usually cannot do very much for themselves. This is due to several reasons, including lack of English language skills, lack of transportation, and lack of knowledge of how the system in the new culture works. Fortunately, they do not have to go through this alone; various kinds of people with different motives come forward to help. The groups identified in this study include 1) the LSS, who are the legal sponsors, 2) the co-sponsors, who are affiliated with other

churches but who are not legal sponsors, and 3) Cambodian friends, neighbors and acquaintances. For this article, only the sponsors and co-sponsors will be discussed; for discussion of Cambodian helpers, see Rajatanavin (1985).

LSS is the major voluntary agency that sponsors most of the Cambodian refugees in Jacksonville. As a legal sponsor of the refugees, it provides several services to help them become self-sufficient as soon as possible. Those services include initial services dealing with immediate needs in establishing new lives for the first 90 days after their arrival and ongoing services which help the refugees with English language skills and with job-seeking and applying.

The Mormon church helps the refugees in ways similar to the LSS, although the help is done with no legal status as a sponsor and with little contact with the LSS. With four full-time missionaries and a few part-time helpers, it is the largest co-sponsor organization, both in terms of the number of people doing the work and the number of refugees involved. Though most of the Cambodians were Buddhists in their own country, a number of them have joined Christian churches since coming to the U.S. More than a hundred refugees joined the Mormon church in 1984. The aim of the Mormons is to get whole families to join, but in many cases, the older refugees refuse, though they allow their children to join because of the help that the church gives them. In many ways, a mutual interest has developed between the Mormons and the refugees, the Mormons wanting new members and the refugees needing help. A number of refugees have reported that the reason they join the church is because of the missionaries' helpfulness. The Mormons are well aware of this situation.

The missionaries constantly visit the refugees, especially the new arrivals, to offer help. Whenever the refugees do need help, they have basically three ways to contact the missionaries. First, the refugees can tell them directly when they come to visit; for people with limited English skills, a written note, e.g. an appointment letter from a doctor's office, is usually shown to the missionaries who then note it down in their own appointment books. Second, the refugees can go to church on Sundays and show the missionaries their notes. Third, in the case of an emergency, refugees can call the missionaries at home, for every church member has these numbers.

The missionaries act as third parties or as bridges between the refugees and the outside world, i.e. with the communication targets. Besides providing transportation to various places, the missionaries speak for the refugees in many situations, sometimes with the help of an interpreter. In some cases, that language help is not really required, such as when paying utility bills or getting food stamps, but the refugees still tend to want someone who can speak the language to go with them as, what one missionary called, a 'security blanket'. Lack of self-confidence in using the language is one of the most important factors that hampers the refugees from doing things themselves.

The kinds of help given by the missionaries that overlap with the LSS relate to health, welfare, and food stamps. The missionaries also do errands for refugees; it is common for the refugees to give money to the missionaries to pay the utility bills or to get money orders for rent or car payments. One of the missionaries said that doing this gives him the chance to see the refugees often and to keep close contact with them so he can talk to them about the church beliefs or ask them to go to church. He further stated that he was afraid of not seeing them frequently, because the church might lose

them as members. Thus, providing these services helps to keep the refugees connected to the church.

Patterns of Interaction

For most of the new arrivals, there is one dominant interaction pattern with people in the outside world, i.e. the targets of the communication activities. That pattern centers on the tendency for third party helpers to act as bridges between the refugees and the targets. Figure #1 illustrates this pattern. In some cases, the refugees who need help do not communicate with the helper, but rather communicate in Cambodian with another Cambodian who speaks English and who then gives the message to the helper. Figure #2 illustrates that pattern.

Dependency factors. There are many reasons why new arrivals cannot or do not communicate directly with the target people in the various situations they face. Five of the most important reasons for their dependence seem to be as follows:

1. Lack of English skills. Low levels of education combined with only a short time of exposure to English before reaching the U.S. leave refugees without the needed language skills.

2. Lack of self-confidence. Most of the refugees feel discouraged when they cannot understand what others say and when others cannot understand what they say. Many Americans faced by the refugees do not have patience, do not give them time to make themselves understood, and do not speak slowly to them. Thus, refugees often have a difficult time in communicating directly with these people and tend to go back into their shells and let the helpers interpret for them. Some of the helpers are

Americans, but the refugees can communicate with them because the helpers are patient and take more time to understand and be understood.

In my observations, the refugees have shown definite tendencies to rely on their helpers, e.g. by standing one step behind the helpers and by letting them do the talking. Most of the time, the circumstances appear to develop a dependency among the refugees on the helpers. That is, the refugees' lack of skills and self-confidence make many situations awkward; the helpers sense this and tend to jump in to make the situations more comfortable and the communication more efficient for all concerned. Then, once the target person realizes the communication difficulties of the refugee, his or her tendency is to address all communication to the helper. Thus, a chain of events seems to inevitably take place, in which a refugee's weaknesses plus the presence of a helper lead to reduced opportunities for the refugee to communicate on his or her own.

3. Lack of transportation and knowledge of how to get around. In Jacksonville, access to mass transportation is very limited for the refugees because of the inadequacy of bus routes and the infrequency of the scheduling. As such, most of the refugees have to rely on the helpers to take them to the places they need to go. Getting a car becomes a main objective of many refugees after they get jobs; every person interviewed who did not have a car stated that he or she would buy one once enough money was earned.

4. Lack of time. Some refugees still ask others to take them places even though their families already have cars, because the husband usually takes the car to work, leaving the wife and children without transportation. Refugees, especially the uneducated, tend not to want to take time off from

work out of fear of being laid-off; as such, the wives have to ask others for help.

5. Convenience. Some of the helpers tend to do whatever the refugees ask for, even simple matters like paying the rent or utility bills, without encouraging the refugees to do these things by themselves. This happens more with the co-sponsors, e.g. the missionaries; the LSS reports that they have had to encourage the co-sponsors to help in ways that enable the refugees to do things for themselves afterward. However, each helper ultimately decides how and when to help. Some co-sponsor helpers think of the refugees as being so helpless and in need of protection, as children need their parents, that it becomes difficult for the helper to draw the line. As one of the missionaries stated:

> It's like a six-year-old child, you teach him how to count, how many nickels make a dollar, he knows where the store is, he's been with you, he knows what lettuce is. But do you send him to the store by himself? A six-year-old all by himself with the money to get it? I think it's the same way with them (the refugees). Do you send them by themselves? Are they ready? Are we doing too much for them? Shall we push them a little bit more to do things for themelves? And I think many times - yes - we're at fault. We do too much for them, maybe, but how do we really say? How do we turn them away and say no?

Clearly, a difference of opinion exists among the helpers as to what exactly the helper's role should entail. For the refugees, it becomes easy to accept and to appreciate assistance so freely given, even though it may hold them back in the long run from becoming acculturated.

Factors associated with independence. Given the dependency on the helpers that builds up in the first year or two of the refugees' lives in the U.S., it seems possible that a long-term dependency could likely develop. However, many refugees become more and more independent after the initial period. The take-off points in becoming independent are as follows:

1. Getting a car. As mentioned before, one of the priorities for many refugees is to get a car as soon after employment as possible. Some families, who have more than one person working, can do it fairly quickly, i.e. within a few months. After getting a car, refugee families tend to become much less dependent on others for transportation. However, other problems related to the car may arise, e.g. getting insurance, accidents, mechanical breakdowns, and so on, which cause the dependency pattern to continue somewhat.

2. Better English skills and more self-confidence. After living and working in the U.S. for a few years, some improvement in language and communication may occur. Some educated people go back to school to learn more English and job skills at night schools, but the majority rarely pursue more education. Given the fact that English ability is considered one of the most important criteria for promotion, those with limited language skills can become economically self-sufficient and survive, but not prosper.

3. Having children with good English skills. For families that have children in school, especially teenagers, the children can generally help because they tend to acquire the language faster. Younger children may also be able to help in some ways, but cannot translate everything for their parents because of limited knowledge of the Cambodian language. Many of the helpers have noted that as more and more children become able to translate for their parents, fewer refugees ask for the helpers' assistance.

4. Encouragement from sponsors and co-sponsors to do things on their own. Some helpers do try to follow the policy of assisting the refugees to do things on their own while also trying to make sure the refugees do not feel personally rejected when they ask for help. For example, the LSS used to give its phone number to the local schools in case of emergencies, but now gives the parents' work numbers to the schools; by doing this, the LSS encourages parents to take more responsibility for their own children. Another example is that helpers usually make appointments with doctors and then take the refugees to the doctors' office; to encourage the refugees to help themselves more, one helper tries to make appointments late in the afternoon so that the refugee's husband or relative has time to finish work and then take the person to the doctor. Instead of the helper doing all the work, the refugees are given chances to do more for themselves; this kind of encouragement seems to be an effective way of making the refugees more independent.

Though all of the helpers reported a desire to help the refugees in this way, my observations indicated that some helpers may be afraid of losing refugees, e.g. those who are church members, once the refugees become independent. As such, some helpers offer to help more in order to keep close contact with the refugees than to actually assist in getting them adjusted to life in the U.S. In one observation, a Cambodian woman told a missionary that she did not need him to take her to the hospital because her husband planned to get off work to take her and translate for her. Instead of being glad that the refugees could help themselves in this way, the missionary expressed his dislike of the idea and insisted on taking her himself, saying that he would find a Cambodian interpreter to assist them.

Thus, rather than encouraging independence, his actions served to maintain the dependency relationship.

The Language Needs Profile

The language needs profile (Figure #3) developed in the study, adapted from Munby (1978), used the following parameters:

1. Communicative event: what the refugee has to do, both receptively and productively.

2. Setting: the situational variable which refers to both physical (time and place) and psychosocial circumstances.

3. Interaction: the roles of the people in the event or situation.

4. Instrumentality: information on the medium (the particular language skills), 'communication mode' (Munby, 1978:76) which involves more distinct types of skills, and channel, e.g. face-to-face, print, telephone.

5. Helper: the kinds of people who help the refugee in the communicative event and their specific roles.

The language or communicative events in the profile were not meant to be comprehensive, but rather to present selected survival and job-related aspects of refugee needs in their initial resettlement period. The criteria used for selection were the frequency of the events and the importance they have on the refugees' lives, as noted by the refugees and the helpers. Four events are illustrated in Figure #3; for the full list of 40 events, see Rajatanavin (1985).

Language Skills and Functions Needed Compared to Those Taught

At the time of this study, the LSS had a survival, skill-based curriculum for all classes, divided into units or topic areas viewed by the

developers as being needed by the refugees in real life. The topic areas included the following: 1) personal identification, 2) time, money, and numbers, 3) shopping for food, 4) shopping for clothes, 5) housing, 6) health, 7) transportation, 8) telephone, 9) community resources, and 10) employment. The last three areas, however, were not yet developed and thus are not dealt with here. The classes at LSS were divided into three levels, with each level working with the same topics but at a different level of language complexity, e.g. more specific objectives were covered in the pre-employment training class than in the literacy classes.

For the purpose of comparison, the language skills and functions taught in each unit were looked at and identified in the language profile in terms of 1) what was needed and taught, and 2) what was needed but not taught.

1) What was needed and taught. The curriculum seemed to be doing quite well in catering to or answering the refugees' language needs in terms of content. Many language skills and functions were covered, and, as such, represented one of the strong points of the curriculum. As Kleinmann and Daniel (1981) have mentioned, teaching topics that are relevant to the refugees' lives and in language which is of immediate use are believed to increase the involvement of the refugees as learners. On a broader level, the curriculum emphasizes speaking and listening skills over reading and writing, which seems justified because the refugees studied often find themselves in face-to-face interactions.

Figure #4 shows examples of the comparison of how the language skills and functions in each unit correspond to the communicative events found in the profile. The left column shows the language skills taught while

the right column shows the communicative events where the refugees could use the skills and functions in their lives.

2) What was needed but not covered in the curriculum. Though the curriculum seemed to cover the language skills and functions fairly well, a few gaps remained, which were as follows:

a) Banking was not covered in any unit, though it was covered previously. Refugees tend to use banks after becoming employed, but are usually not familiar with banking practices and procedures in the U.S., often thinking that they need much money before opening any accounts. They still save money but in other ways; many stated that they would like to put it in the bank, but did not know how to go about it.

In addition, many refugees do not know how to use checks; in Cambodia, every monetary transaction was settled with cash and the refugees operate in the same way in the U.S. For example, all of the people interviewed pay rent and utility bills in cash, if they go in person, or else buy money orders for payment by mail. Some said that they realize the inconvenience of buying money orders every month and would like to be able to use checks, but do not know how to use them. Given the importance and frequency of these matters, it would seem beneficial to include some instruction on banking for the refugees.

b) The unit on transportation covers only some of the language skills and functions that may be useful. The focus seems to be on taking the driver's license examination and buying a car, but the refugees need more. As identified in the profile of needs, specific language skills and functions for buying car insurance, making insurance claims, reporting on accidents, paying traffic tickets, calling for tow service, and taking a car to a repair

shop are important and many refugees stated that they do not know how to do these things and must depend on others most of the time.

c)The curriculum did not cover the skills and functions related to mailing letters and going to the post office, both of which are important to the refugees' lives. As mentioned before, communication among the refugees is very good; many in Jacksonville have friends and relatives in other states and in camps in South East Asia. Many of them send money, packages, and letters to these people and much of it is done through the helpers.

Recommendations

Comparing the language skills and functions taught in the LSS' ESL curriculum with those identified in the profile, it can be said that what is covered in class is generally similar to what the refugees really need to know in daily life. However, one of the major findings of this study is that, in fact, the refugees do not seem to learn these skills and rarely use what is taught in class outside the classroom. In addition, the refugees are very much dependent on other people to help and communicate for them. Thus, the situation leaves ESL curriculum designers and teachers with the question, "What can we do about it?" Before attempting to answer this question, it seems to look at how and why the problem is so evident.

Schumann's (1976) idea of "social distance" and criteria for deciding whether language learning situations are good or bad seem to be relevant as guidelines in looking at the refugees' situations in Jacksonville. Using these criteria, i.e. political, cultural, technical or economic status, degree of enclosure, cohesiveness, similarity between cultures, attitudes toward other groups, and intended length of residence, to determine the social distance,

one can safely say that the distance is very wide. Americans are the dominant group with much higher status; the cultures are very different; and the U.S. is a high-tech, industrial culture whereas the refugees come from a low-tech, agricultural one. Moreover, the refugees tend to have high enclosure, living in ethnic communities, going to Cambodian churches with services conducted in their own language, and having little contact with Americans other than the helpers. In terms of attitudes, the Cambodians are legal refugees, a status with negative connotations. Though the refugees are generally grateful that the U.S. has accepted them, they still have some prejudice toward Americans due to the cultural differences. The only criterion that seems to reduce the social distance is the fact that the refugees assume they will be in the U.S. for a long time, even though many still hope to go back to Cambodia if conditions change for the better. Given this wide gap between the two groups, we might expect that learning English would be a very difficult and only partially successful endeavor for most of the Cambodians studied in Jacksonville.

Clarke (1976) discusses the issue of cultural adjustment as a primary focus for second language researchers and teachers. He points out the similarities between second language learners and those who suffer from schizophrenia, in terms of psychological and social stresses, and notes that "like the schizophrenic, the foreigner suffers from a sense of helplessness in the face of conflicting environmental cues" (1976:379). This leads to what Oberg (1960) calls 'culture shock'. A foreigner's encounters with native speakers thus requires much more work than is needed with those in one's own group just to keep communicative situations flowing smoothly. As a result, it is common for people to develop defense mechanisms, e.g. rejecting the new environment and retreating into self-contained ethnic communities

where target language communication can be avoided. This theoretical perspective can easily be applied to the situation that the Cambodians face.

Given the implications of Schumann's (1976) and Clarke's (1976) work, it seems evident that curriculum design and teaching must go beyond traditional classroom orientations if it is to have any real chance of being successful for the majority of these refugee learners. Though Clarke (1976:378) states that "there is, after all, little that we language teachers can do to affect a student's self image, his desire to become part of the target culture, or his perception of his relative status of his society to ours", ESL teachers need to

at least be sensitive to this whole psycho-social issue and look for ways to encourage more successful learning opportunities. With this foundation, the following recommendations seem appropriate:

1. Encourage the refugees to use English outside the classroom with other Americans, not only their teachers or helpers. That corresponds to the findings of this study. The need, as Kleinmann and Daniel (1981) have discussed, is that the refugees should have opportunities for cross-cultural contacts. Various techniques can be used to get the refugees more involved in activities in the English-speaking community, including field trips, "Ask an American" homework assignments, and sponsoring cultural exchanges.

Field trips to various places in the community, e.g. the bank, the library, different kinds of stores, the post office, etc., have already been used at the LSS school and have been evaluated by teachers as a very effective way of making the students aware of what is available in the community. "Ask an American" homework assignments, in which students are given questions about American society to ask Americans, give the learners good reasons to approach their American neighbors or acquaintances; the answers

and the experiences can then be discussed in class. This technique has been regarded by teachers in university ESL settings as being quite useful, though the learners typically have much better English skills than the refugees. Having cultural exchanges is another technique to give the refugees opportunities to have direct contact with Americans. One way of doing this is for teachers to arrange for groups of learners to give talks, e.g. one minute per person, with each one talking about a different aspect of their lives, country, family life, etc. and then answer questions and engage in conversation with interested groups of Americans, e.g. the Rotary Club, Kiwanis, church groups, school groups, and so on. Another way of arranging cultural exchanges is by finding American volunteers to take the refugees out for an evening, e.g. going to a movie, having dinner, etc. A refugee with weak English could be placed with a more fluent speaker to make the experience smoother and less threatening. Many people fear the unknown; well-structured cross-cultural experiences can help to open the doors to acculturation and second language acquisition.

2. Given the refugees' fears, lack of self-confidence, and avoidance of using English, it seems appropriate to give them as many opportunities to practice using what they are taught. Two particular techniques useful for this are role-playing and simulation. Role-playing allows the learners to both use the language and social forms in realistic situations (Donahue and Parsons, 1982). Topics and themes used in role-plays can be drawn from real life situations that the refugees have to encounter, as noted in the profile, e.g. telling the landlord to fix a leaking faucet, calling the doctor's office to make an appointment, etc. According to Donahue and Parsons, role-playing helps students to learn the rules of speaking (Hymes, 1972) which include the when, where, how, and why of making an utterance. Intonation,

touching, facial expressions, timing of laughter and movement, appropriateness of responses, etc. are integral parts of conversational patterns and, as such, can be helpful to breaking down communication barriers. Simulations involve longer periods of time and move through situations from beginning to end. For example, when learning about car accidents, a role-play might deal only with calling the police, whereas a simulation might cover calling the police, reporting the account of the accident, calling a tow service if needed, contacting the insurance agent, making a claim, etc. Munnell, et al. (1985) finds simulation a very successful way to teach refugees about American medical facilities and practices; it helps the refugees to become familiar with the whole context of interaction and helps to build their self-confidence in using English in those situations.

3. The first two recommendations relate to techniques that teachers can use in and out of the classroom to encourage more realistic and direct contact with the host community while improving self-confidence and language abilities. However, teachers are not the only people who affect these matters; the helpers' involvement with refugees seems to have great effect on the refugees' language learning experiences. As mentioned, the refugees tend to fall back on the helpers a great deal during the initial period of resettlement. This leads to increased enclosure rather than acculturation. Thus, no matter how much and how long refugees receive ESL instruction, they usually do not apply it to their real lives. Seeing this pattern serves to discourage the teachers somewhat. One teacher stated that in the beginning she had high expectations that five to six months of language training would enable the refugees to go out and use what they had learned in class, but she now only expects the ESL program to provide a

transitional period for the refugees from their lives in the camps to their lives in the U.S. workforce.

One way to improve the situation would be to change the ways that the helpers assist the refugees. The ideal kind of assistance, which seems to be agreed upon by every helper, is to assist the refugees so that they can learn to help themselves. However, as the study has found, each helper has his or her own way of doing this; most of the time, the helpers seem to just do things for the refugees. Thus, it would seem that much closer supervision of the helpers along with stricter guidelines about how, how much and how often help should be given is advisable. Without this, the helpers will perhaps unwittingly work against the objectives of language learning and acculturation.

Recommendations for Further Research

Other research topics that emerge from this study include the following:

1. To study the effects of prolonged camp life of Cambodian refugees on their resettlement in the countries of asylum. The recently arrived Cambodians in the U.S. are usually those who have spent a relatively long time in the camps, where they did nothing but wait and had almost everything provided for them. Some of the sponsor's staff and co-sponsors have mentioned that some refugees tend to be quite passive, developing a 'camp mentality,' waiting for someone else to help them all the time. As such, it might be useful to investigate whether the length of time spent in camps inhibits the process of resettlement and acculturation.

2. To study resettlement patterns and language needs of educated refugees and uneducated ones, for any differences, looking both at intra-

group comparison, e.g. Cambodian farmers vs. Cambodian ex-government officials, teachers, and students, etc. and inter-group comparison, e.g. Cambodian and Vietnamese. One of the implications drawn from the present study is that the early arriving Cambodians, who tend to have more education, have fewer difficulties in adjusting to the new life, learning English, and becoming self-sufficient than the later arrivals, who tended to have less education. A comparison between different ethnic groups would be enlightening as well. According to the LSS staff, the Vietnamese on average have at least 10-12 years of formal schooling while the Cambodians average four years or less. When the Vietnamese come to the U.S., they tend to pursue more education, e.g. for a General Education certificate or for vocational job skills, before going into the workforce. In contrast, the Cambodians are less interested in education and tend to plunge into entry-level jobs as soon as they can. Perhaps such patterns should be investigated further, together with how the patterns affect the refugees in becoming acculturated and self-sufficient.

3. To compare English language use, resettlement patterns, and the rate of becoming self-sufficient of refugees in different types of work settings, e.g. those who work in places with many refugees as opposed to those who work in places with more Americans. One of the employment specialists remarked that refugees who worked in companies with many refugees seemed to develop less second language ability than those who worked where there were fewer refugees.

4. To identify and analyze different styles of assistance that the helpers give to the refugees, e.g. help by doing everything for them, help by teaching so that they can learn to do it by themselves, or help by doing some

tasks and letting the refugees do the rest. Comparing the effects of each style could aid in developing more effective guidelines.

5. To study English language use of the refugees at work. This research project was designed to study this, but due to the difficulty of finding cooperative companies, this objective had to be abandoned. One possible way to gain access into companies is for this kind of research to be carried out by or in conjunction with the voluntary agency, e.g. LSS. Since some of the companies ask the LSS to send ESL teachers to the plants to provide ESL instruction for their refugee workers after work, the English used in working situations could be studied by those teachers.

6. To study the language program's support system which may work against the aims of the program. Further research could be done by presenting what has been found in this and other studies to all the parties involved, such as policy makers, program administrators, teachers, helpers, and the refugees themselves; by making them aware of the situation, and having them discuss all the implications with each other, perhaps a consensus for further action might develop.

In conclusion, the proposed research topics should yield helpful information and findings to all people who are involved with refugee resettlement. For researchers, such studies would contribute to the body of knowledge about refugees and resettlement. For those more directly involved in resettlement efforts, such as the voluntary agencies, more understanding of these areas of concern can help them to provide services and facilitate the resettlement process more effectively.

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FIGURE 1

Pattern of Interaction (a)

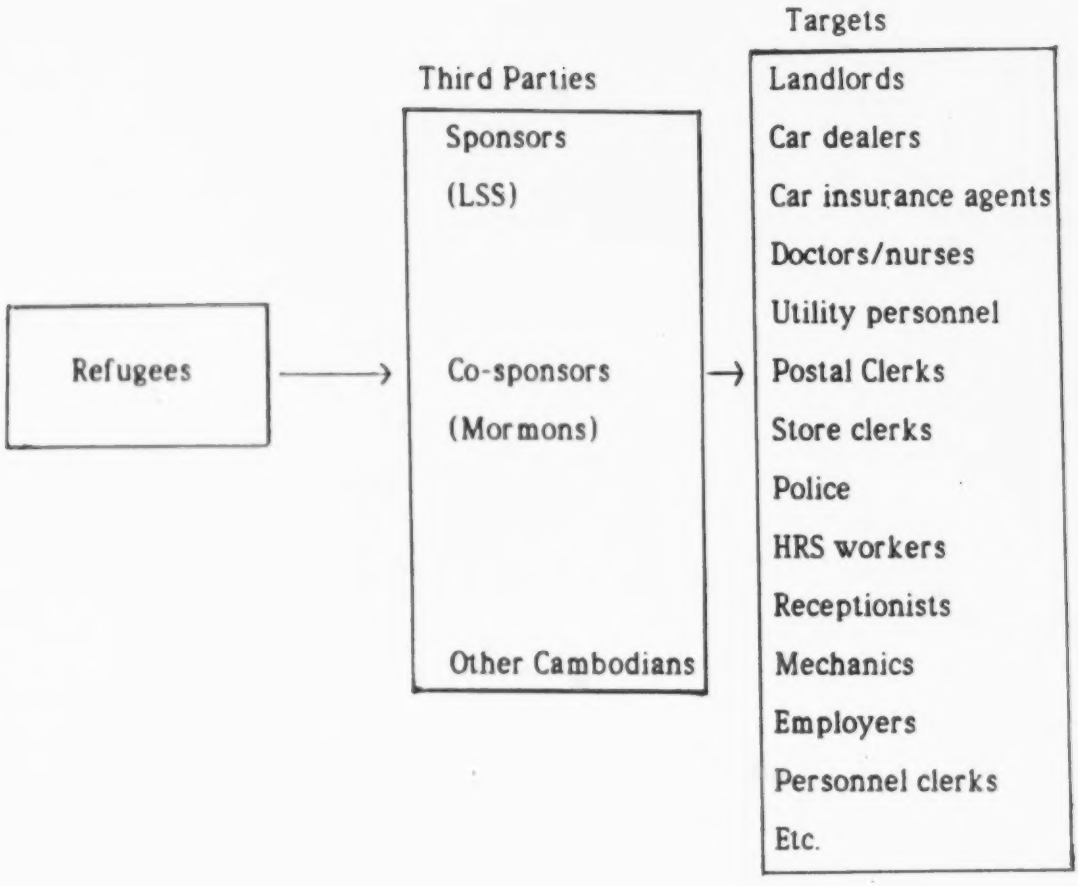

FIGURE 2

Pattern of Interaction (b)

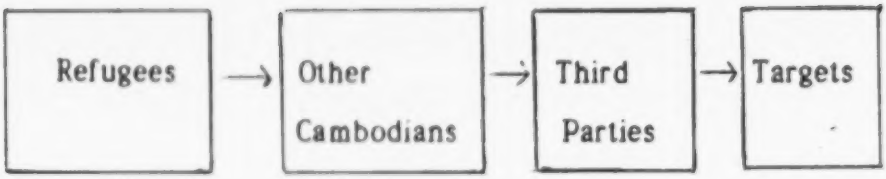

FIGURE 3

Language Needs Profile Sample

Communicative Event #4:

Main: Getting medicine at the health center

Sub-events:

1. Greeting and departing
2. Identifying oneself and stating purpose of visit
3. Listening to instructions for medicine use
4. Reading medicine label
5. Making an appointment for the next visit

Setting:

Physical: (Time) By appointment (Place) Jacksonville Health Center

Psycho-social: Public, formal, quiet

Interaction:

Refugee's role: Patient

Target's role: Receptionist/nurse

Instrumentality:

Medium: Speaking, listening, and reading

Mode: Dialogue: spoken to be heard, Monologue: spoken to be heard, Monologue: written to be read

Channel: Face-to-face and print

Helper

Identity: LSS staff, co-sponsors, or relatives and friends

Roles:

1. Provide transportation
2. Help to talk to receptionist and interpret the instructions for using the medicine
3. In some cases, get the medicine alone, take it to the refugee, and explain how to use it.

FIGURE 4

Comparison between language needed and language taught

Language skills and functions taught	Communicative events identified in the profile
Unit one - Personal identification	
1. Identifying self and others--giving and spelling, orally and in writing, first and last names of self and classmates 2. Asking and answering questions about factual information--about address, phone number, marital status, birthdate, etc.	1 and 2.--Applying for food stamps and WIC program --Seeing a doctor and going to the hospital --Calling to make an appointment, for an ambulance or for a tow car --Buying prescribed medicine --Opening a bank account --Taking a driver's license examination --Applying for a Florida I.D. card --Buying a car and car insurance --Reporting a car accident --Applying for a job and medical insurance

3. Greeting people--using appropriate forms of address; making and responding to introductions	3. It is used in almost all situations. Note: Some refugees reported that they are taught only certain forms of greeting, e.g., "How are you?", and do not know how to answer when someone asks, "How are you doing?"
4. Following directions--giving and responding to classroom directions, including gestures.	4. Picking up food stamps, the WIC check, medicine, etc. --Seeing a doctor, going to the hospital --Cashing a check --Taking a driver's license examination --Applying for a Florida I.D. card
5. Asking and answering requests for clarification and expressing lack of understanding	5. It can be useful in all situations where refugees do not understand what is said to them.

Biographical Statement

Araya Rajatanavin Maurice is an assistant professor at Chulalongkorn University Language Institute in Bangkok, Thailand. She received a Ph.D. in Educational Research and Evaluation from Florida State University. This paper summarizes her doctoral dissertation research.

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